

What do you think?

There’s nothing more important to me than hearing directly from you. What do you think about the problems facing our state? How can we create opportunities for all and make Washington a better place to live?

☐ Yes, I'd like to receive legislative updates via e-mail.


My e-mail address is:



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Washington State
Department of Printing

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 Printed on recycled paper



11th Legislative District

Session Update 2001

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Dear neighbors,

This year, the Legislature is tackling tough issues: balancing the budget, improving our public schools, solving the energy crisis and finding answers to our transportation problems.

Our district is unique, with special attributes and our own problems. Parts of our district are thriving while other neighborhoods struggle. That needs to change. My initiative for this year is to promote "Economic Vitality for All."

I'd like to use this newsletter to inform you about two ways I am proposing we foster economic prosperity in our community:

- Preserving quality of life
- Investing in people

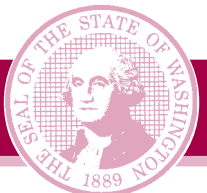
I hope you find this newsletter helpful. If you have questions about these issues or anything else happening in the Legislature, do not hesitate to contact my office and my legislative aide, Matthew Nakata.

Thank you again for the honor and privilege of serving as your representative. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Velma Veloria

Rep. Velma Veloria



Preserving Quality of Life

Renewable energy

California's energy crisis hit our state hard. Citizens rely on affordable energy to keep their homes warm this winter, and local businesses depend on stable energy prices.

I'm happy to report that we've developed a plan to encourage clean, affordable energy in Washington state. Nuclear plants create radioactive waste; coal-burning plants pollute; and natural-gas burning plants may run out of natural gas in ten years.

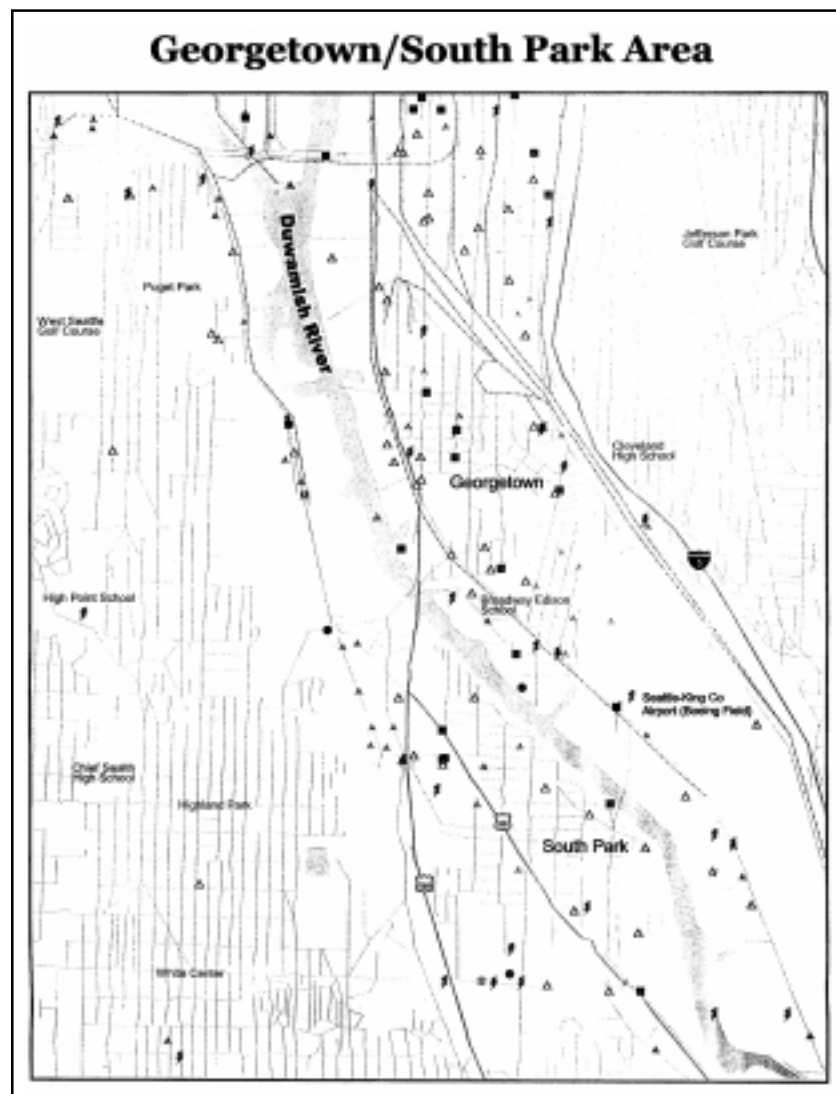
So it's more important than ever to push for clean, renewable energy such as solar power, wind generators or fuel cells. I support legislation creating tax incentives for renewable energy. We can have clean, affordable power if we plan now and make the right decisions.

Environmental justice

One essential component of my initiative is preserving the quality of life in our community. I have heard from many of you about health concerns, including asthma and skin ailments, that may be connected to pollution or toxic waste. What's really out there? I believe we should have the right to know about pollution and hazardous waste in our neighborhoods.

There's a high cost to our health — and our economy — when hazardous waste isn't handled correctly or pollution gets out of control. It costs far more to clean up the mess than to prevent it in the first place.

Since hazardous waste and pollution pose a threat to public health, it's only right that every citizen be informed about what's happening in local neighborhoods. You might be surprised to learn our area has 195 sites with hazardous waste or pollution. Citizens should have a right to know about toxic waste and pollution in their neighborhoods! The Environmental Justice Act (House Bill 1411) would have given us that knowledge so we can all make the right decisions for our future. Unfortunately, the bill did not pass out of committee. I am committed to working to build support so this bill can pass next year.



Investing in People Economic development

Investing in people means creating jobs necessary to provide middle class opportunities for the jobless and working poor. The Washington CASH program gives business training, credit and peer support to low-income women and people with disabilities who are committed to starting their own business. CASH targets women because (1) it believes women are at an economic disadvantage in our society and (2) women are better borrowers, repaying loans with a much higher frequency than men and using business profits to better their families. For more information, visit www.washingtoncash.org or call (206) 352-1945.

Another important piece of legislation is House Bill 1265, which would help struggling rural communities rebuild and diversify their economy by building up their infrastructure.

House Bill 1708 would give cities and counties another tool to ease the housing crunch. For too many working families and middle-class people, finding affordable housing is close to impossible. That has to change.

Prosperity Partnership

Any new business needs capital -- a fancy word for a loan. That's especially true for women and minorities, who face extra barriers to getting a business started.

The Prosperity Partnership Account (House Bill 1587) would restore an expired law that gave low-interest loans to 247 minority and women entrepreneurs, creating jobs and opportunities that otherwise wouldn't exist.

The program works by having banks make these loans in the communities they serve. The business loans have a lower interest rate through the support of the state.

This is a win-win program for our communities, and I'm hopeful we can bring back this successful program.

Earthquake relief

Services are available, if you or someone you know incurred damages due to the Feb. 28th earthquake.

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) is available to workers in King, Kitsap, Lewis, Mason, Pierce, Thurston, Snohomish and Grays Harbor counties who became unemployed as a result of the earthquake, but do not qualify for regular unemployment benefits. Qualified applicants will be eligible to receive from \$140 to \$478 per week, in benefits. To request an application form be mailed or faxed to you, call 1-866-416-7274. The application period is 30 days after March 7.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is working with the Washington State's Emergency Management Division (EMD) to help the state and citizens recover from the Feb. 28th earthquake. The application period is 60 days after March 1. Call the Disaster Field Office in Olympia at 1-800-492-9029 or TCC 1-800-462-7585 for more information and application instructions.

FEMA - <http://www.fema.gov>
EMD - <http://www.wa.gov/wsem/>



I'm happy to report the House of Representatives passed two measures to restore the status of Filipino veterans of World War II. It's time to treat these brave men as the equals of the soldiers they fought beside.